

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Currently Amended) An easy-to-use manual grinder for peppercorns, salt crystals and other grindable products ~~of the type~~ comprising a container with a shaft located therein, passing therethrough and bearing substantially conical round ~~type~~ grinder plates coupled to the shaft at a lower end thereof at its base, said shaft is coupled having at its at an upper end thereof to a toothed wheel operatively connected to a rack which is able to slide in an essentially perpendicular direction to the axis of the shaft, the toothed wheel and its operative connection to the rack is contained inside an upper casing at an upper end of said container, said upper casing has an opening via which grindable products can be introduced into said container, a chute connecting the opening in the upper casing to an opening in a partition which separates the toothed wheel and rack from the part of the container in which grindable product is located and a lid moveable to open and close the opening in the upper casing.
2. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said rack is biased to a release position by a return spring.
3. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said return spring is located in a longitudinal cavity of said rack.
4. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 2 wherein said return spring is arranged to apply a torque to said toothed wheel.
5. (Currently Amended) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 2, wherein a bearing element is provided at one end of said rack, said bearing element in the release position of the rack jutting out beyond the side of said upper casing~~container~~.
6. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 3 -wherein a catch is provided above the toothed wheel, the catch having lower teeth which mesh with upper teeth coupled to said toothed wheel.

7. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said catch is pushed against said toothed wheel by a spring.
8. (Currently Amended) Manual grinder as claimed in Claims 4, wherein said ~~toothed wheel, spring and said rack are contained inside an upper casing which~~ is connected to said an upper end of said container.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Currently Amended) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim ~~11~~8, wherein said lid can be rotated around a fastener provided on an axis parallel to the axis of said shaft.
13. (Currently Amended) Manual grinder as claimed in claim ~~11~~8 wherein said lid can be rotated around a fastener which fastens said lid to the upper casing.
14. (Currently Amended) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 2, further including an operating lever for said rack, wherein said operating lever is ~~wherein~~ hinged by a hinge on the exterior of said container ~~is an operating lever for said rack~~.
15. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in claim 14 wherein the hinge is located at the lower end of said container.
16. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 5 wherein said bearing element of said rack is engaged with an upper end of an operating lever hinged by a hinge to the exterior of said container.

17. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said bearing element fits into a longitudinal cavity provided on an upper inner part of said operating lever during operation of said lever.
18. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 14 or 16, wherein said container and said operating lever are of such a size that they can be held by the user in one hand.
19. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said lower teeth of said catch and said upper teeth of said toothed wheel have straight teeth on one side and inclined teeth on the other.
20. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 11 wherein said container is substantially tubular in shape, and said shaft passes longitudinally through said container.
21. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claims 20, wherein said grinder plates are located in a base which is open at the bottom and connected to the bottom of said container.
22. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 8, wherein said upper casing is substantially tubular.
23. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in Claim 10 wherein said container is of a transparent material.
24. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in claim 10 further including a latch mechanism operable to selectively retain the handle in a non-operative position.

25. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in claim 24 wherein the latch mechanism includes a button slidingly engaged with the handle, the button having a latch element which is engageable with an abutment on the container.
26. (Original) Manual grinder as claimed in any one of claim 10 wherein one of the grinder plates is coupled to the shaft by a ratchet mechanism.